

# EQUATIONS' Comments and Additions to the Draft Tourism Policy for Andaman and Nicobar Islands

## Summary Report

EQUATIONS  
20 January 2009

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
<b>1. Introduction</b>	optimum economic growth and employment generation			While the approach for optimum economic growth and employment generation from tourism is a positive one, it must be kept in view that tourism is not about economic aspects only, but it is a people centred activity and it is a way of developing respect and appreciation for people, places and cultures
		infrastructure		Infrastructure should take into account needs of local people and should not privilege needs of tourism industry and tourists only
<b>2. Tourism in A&amp;N Islands</b>		UT does not have any other competitive advantage		There is a problem on relying too much on tourism
		There has been a tendency on the part of players to treat tourism as a cash cow rather than a star, thereby killing the goose that can lay the golden eggs.		The tourism product in Andamans is neither The introduction of a tourism policy needs to talk about important, core principles and values of tourism development
		for earning substantial amount of revenue		The assumption that tourism will bring substantial amount of revenue to the Islands is not substantiated. Rather our research study has shown otherwise
		Tourism not only generates employment		In relation to employment, recorded tourism employs less than 1.5 per cent of the total main workforce of the Islands.
	it is imperative that while growth of the sector in A&N			

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
	Islands is encouraged, it should at the same time be orderly and regulated			
			to open up investment in infrastructure and development	Tourism has very few hurdles in investment from a regulatory point of view, e.g. 100% FDI. Therefore, it is not clear why this is being stated and what is actually being sought here. It may be useful if the IP&T could state what it is proposing
<b>3. Vision</b>			develop the Andaman & Nicobar Islands as a unique eco-friendly tourist destination	We notice that while the reference is to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, we assume that the policy does not apply to the Nicobars as the Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulations, 1956 does not permit it What the IP&T consider as eco-friendly needs to be given in detail
<b>4. Mission</b>		developing eco-friendly tourist infrastructure of International standards		The development of tourism and related infrastructure requires a paradigm shift as there is a need to first understand the carrying capacity of various locations identified for tourism; second to arrive at architecture that is most suited to the environment of the Islands; and third to identify those materials that are locally available in sufficient quantities. Options of harnessing sound environment friendly technologies need to be explored and standards worked out to be followed by the tourism industry
	carrying capacity of the islands			The proposal of looking into the "carrying capacity" for tourism in the Islands is a good approach. It would be helpful if the Administration could put in the public realm any carrying capacity studies - not only environmental, but also social, visual, psychological - that may have been undertaken. If not, then the process of undertaking such a study - methodology, time frame, involvement of agencies - may be given
<b>5. SWOT analysis</b>				Unique biodiversity and endemic species

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
<u>a. Strengths</u>				
		No crime or anti-social activities		Existence of drug abuse among tourists cannot be overlooked
		Unexplored Destinations		danger in opening up fragile ecosystems to tourism
				Currently most tourism establishments locally owned, while this trend is changing
<u>b. Weaknesses</u>			Lack of basic tourism infrastructure	The IP&T needs to detail out what it considers as basic infrastructure
			Single window system for clearing tourism projects	While we believe that procedures should be effective and efficient particularly for small and medium scale enterprises, but very often single window clearance system is a pseudonym for a dilution of all regulatory mechanisms. We caution against this approach
	High cost of development of infrastructure			Therefore commitment to use of local materials and low energy infrastructure become even more critical
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reliable database of tourism establishments and tourists – profile, activities, preferences. This reduces the Department’s ability to make effective plans.</li> <li>Local self-government institutions currently have a less active role in influencing tourism</li> <li>Poor inter-departmental coordination</li> <li>Levels of local employment in tourism related activities and its seasonality</li> <li>Currently the design of tourism in the Islands has not ensured maximum local benefits Lack of positioning of tourism in the Islands has resulted in a large number of tourists whose draw is not the ecological beauty and fragility of the Islands. This has led to inappropriate tourist behaviour – littering, destruction of coral reefs, and demand for facilities inappropriate to the context of the Island. Therefore, awareness building and sensitisation of tourists is currently rather poor.</li> <li>Being a settled community, the culture of</li> </ul>

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
				local entrepreneurship is poor
<u>c. Opportunities</u>				Positioning Andamans as a unique destination for tourists who are keen to explore and who are sensitive to its ecological aspects
			Scope for Promotion of adventure sea sports	Ensure that it does not impact fragile marine ecosystems
				Develop specialised vocational training centres that would train local youth in hospitality and tourism services, other sections interested in engaging in tourism
		Medical tourism Creek Cruise Tourism MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions & Exhibitions) Tourism/Business Tourism. Cruise Tourism		Instead of mindlessly listing various forms of tourism products when the ecological fragility of the Islands has been acknowledged, and there being no place presently for accommodating the infrastructure required for these tourism forms, key issues of positioning the Islands for "eco-friendly" tourism needs to be seriously considered. We believe these products should not be promoted in the Islands
				<u>d. Threats</u> <u>Policies &amp; laws</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unplanned and unregulated tourism development</li> <li>Dilution and inadequate implementation of laws, guidelines</li> <li>Lack of monitoring and regulation of tourism activities e.g. coral viewing areas</li> </ul> <u>Environmental</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism related infrastructure not conducive to island ecology</li> <li>No control over where tourism establishments come up; violation of CRZ norms</li> <li>Climate change impacts on the Islands has simply not been taken into account</li> <li>No water harvesting, conservation strategy in the backdrop of severe shortages and high</li> </ul>

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
				<p>water use by tourism establishments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High energy usage e.g. ACs from burning of diesel for generating electricity</li> <li>• Lack of solid waste and sewage management systems</li> </ul> <p><i><u>Socio-cultural</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevalence of drug abuse among foreign tourists</li> </ul> <p><i><u>Economic</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trend among policy makers and industry to bank on tourism as a significant economic activity. However, research undertaken by EQUATIONS et al, 2008 has shown that at the macro level tourism does not play a significant role; there is relatively low tourist spending, and linkages of tourism activities to local primary economy are weak; the revenue generation from tourism is minimal to the Administration and local economy, and low level of local employment. Research world over, particularly in small island states, has proven that over-reliance on tourism only increases economic vulnerability.</li> <li>• Escalating land prices due to procurement by mainland players</li> </ul> <p><i><u>Institutional</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lack of a strong role of local authorities and institutions of local self-government in shaping tourism policy and processes may result in forms of tourism that do not reflect local aspirations, realities and needs.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Objectives</b>			Promote Eco-tourism	Promotion of ecotourism should also include components of community as per definition; it needs

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
				to be done in a true sense. There is a prevalence of beach tourism in the Islands, which has the potential to become a green-wash if allowed to go under the garb of ecotourism
			Generate substantial revenue for A & N Islands	Over-reliance on tourism needs to be checked; for whom? Investment from mainland may not retain revenue in the Islands
			To be the number one Indian destination by per capital market share of visitor's expenditure	The reference here to low-volume – high-value type of luxury tourism needs a precautionous approach as the fragile ecosystem of the Islands may not be able to take it
			Offer opportunities to the youth not only for employment but also for taking up activities of nation building character	What does it mean?
			aqua sports	While some forms are acceptable, some which will degrade coral reefs need to be avoided
			To develop world class infrastructure i.e. hotels, Resorts, connectivity by road, air, ship etc to cater to the demand of foreign tourists	As mentioned above, privileging infrastructure for tourism rather than local people will have its own problems where the discontentment of local people will increase when they see tourists getting the good facilities and they are left without it. Providing infrastructure is an inter-departmental issue and the responsibilities need to be taken up with the respective departments, e.g. why is tourism providing money for building roads while it is the APWD's prerogative
				Increase accessibility e.g. for people with disability Stakeholders of tourism need to be much more Ensuring local benefits through forward and backward linkages from tourism development
<b>7. Strategy</b>	The Govt. will have to withdraw from its present role as a tourism-service provider, but steadily perform as a facilitator and regulator			Current regulations (CRZ, EIA, MoEF guidelines, building bye laws for Port Blair) need to be fully implemented and those specific to the Islands need to be put in place e.g. building regulations for other areas

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
		facilities for holding conventions for MICE		
	It will also co-ordinate with the different agencies involved in building roads, providing air & shipping services, transportation over land services, to ensure that tourists have a range of choices for their inter-island commutes			including institutions of local self-government
		Services of consultants for planning and executing a 10-15 year perspective plan which has to be broader and reflects local needs of tourism that would revolve and evolve around the mission of the Tourism Department.		Very often relying on external consultants does not reflect local needs and aspirations. Therefore we recommend a process of arriving at a perspective plan which is participatory
	Regulate the activities of the other private stake holders such as Travel Agents and Tour Operators, the private transportation providers by air, sea & road, and the accommodation providers like Hotels, restaurants, resorts, bars while simultaneously monitoring closely the operations and activities in different destinations			
	The Tourism Department will be expected to engage pro-actively in coordinating with them so that their			

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
	administration, policies and guidelines, promotion and marketing of tourism related activities harmonize with the Tourism Policy			
			To encourage community participation, the UT Administration will endeavour to involve youngsters & encourage an attitudinal change in them towards tourists, through quizzes, competitions, film festivals, seminars etc	These are more awareness building activities and there seems to be a limited notion of community participation. What should rather be considered is how to engage the community in a healthy debate on tourism e.g. in the gram sabha system, building entrepreneurial skills, providing access to procedures, providing incentives and access to credit, skill / capacity building to ensure viable, economic activity at the local level; and building awareness on tourism impacts. Mechanisms for listening to communities where tourism is negatively impacting them and making course corrections; building their capacity to influence and shape tourism policy, implementation, and ensuring active engagement, develop tools to assess and monitor impacts at local level are few areas that may be considered for community involvement in tourism
				Strategy on positioning and marketing of tourism  Innovation & creativity – leveraging on IT, develop forms of tourism that are eco-sensitive  Research tourism impacts and its role in planning and regulating
<b>8. Role of U.T. Administration</b>	As per adopted strategy, a conscious decision has to be taken by the Administration to withdraw from its present style of functioning as a service provider in all the myriad manifestations of hotelier, tour operator, destination manager,			



Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
	etc. and to take on the role of facilitator, coordinator and regulator			
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introducing regulatory measures to ensure social, cultural and environmental sustainability. It is important to add to this the aspect of setting in mechanisms for monitoring impacts through the formation of tourism monitoring forums or cells at local /community level that could be run by the community themselves.</li> <li>2. Ensuring that the type and scale of tourism development is compatible with the environment and socio-cultural milieu.</li> <li>3. Ensuring that the local community is fully involved and the benefits of tourism accrue to them.</li> <li>4. Facilitating availability of trained manpower and by providing training and exposure to the local youth.</li> <li>5. Undertaking research including folklore,</li> </ol>			

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
	legends etc and compiling, preparing master plans and facilitating formulation and strategies. Research should also include assessing trends and impacts of tourism both positive and negative.			
		Providing faster mode and adequate number of transport facilities by procuring luxury buses/vans, luxury cruise liners speed boats, catamarans, hovercrafts, helicopter etc for establishing proper inter-island and intra-island connectivity		
	Wayside amenities with cafeteria, toilets, mini-store, pharmacy etc to be established on government land in every major tourist destinations			Which are also easily accessible to local people, run by cooperatives e.g. women SHGs, and also include provisions for local people to sell local produce, arts etc so as to encourage tourists to use and consume local products. These amenities are built in eco-friendly ways to reflect IP&T's commitment to sustainable tourism
			Promote Rural Tourism to scatter tourism activities from Port Blair and to provide employment opportunity for the youth in countryside	The lessons from successes and failures from RURAL TOURISM on mainland are only beginning to be learnt. It would be important to learn from the lessons before scattering these activities in the Islands
<u>Inter-Departmental Coordination</u>			Empowered Committee	Suggest renaming the committee as Tourism Coordination Committee The membership of the Committee is rather large,

Draft policy	Positive	Negative	Unclear	EQUATIONS Proposed Text
				which will make it difficult to convene, arrive at consensus and take decisions. In addition, the current setup of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration is such that many departments are under one Secretary. Therefore, we recommend that the members need to be chosen based on due consideration as to the role that they would play.
		Facilitate potential investors in obtaining necessary clearance for tourism projects		We don't believe this is the role of the Committee
			Advice on research, studies and documentation	The Committee should be guided by the vision, mission and objectives of the policy
			Those departments which are directly associated with the Tourism sector would comply with the orders of this committee, in a time bound manner.	suggest changing orders to recommendations
<b>9. Action Plan</b>				We have deliberately not commented on the Action Plan as there is first the need to map the objectives and strategies. The action plan then needs to be prepared accordingly, in order to ensure that key areas like sustainability, impacts, community participation are not left out

*You may reproduce this paper/publication in whole or in part for educational, advocacy or not-for-profit purposes. We would appreciate acknowledging EQUATIONS as the source and letting us know of the use.*

Contact us

[info@equitabletourism.org](mailto:info@equitabletourism.org)

+91-80-2545-7607 / 2545-7659

EQUATIONS, # 415, 2C-Cross, 4th Main, OMBR Layout, Banaswadi, Bangalore 560043, India

[www.equitabletourism.org](http://www.equitabletourism.org)